

# MISS BAYARD'S YOGI

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IT was in the train somewhere between Cawnpore and Benares that it occurred to Miss Bayard she had not seen a yogi. The attentive young man in charge of their "Round the World party starting from New York per steamer," etc., had quite lived up to expectations in the way of "Color of the East," "Gorgeous Palaces," "Temples of Mystery," and so forth. He had even provided them with a juggler entertainment, when some three partly nude figures came and sat in the dust in front of the hotel piazza and made a six-foot mango tree grow from a seed, with two cobras squirming in the branches, all to the accompaniment of very real oriental music. But of the genuine occult, something really uncanny, a yogi exercising his extraordinary power of divination, for example, they had so far not caught even the slightest glimpse.

True, there was no promise of a yogi on the printed itinerary of the trip; but Miss Bayard felt that if she could return to Cincinnati with the travel record of having actually met a yogi, something unusual would have been accomplished. Just exactly what she expected the yogi to do was perhaps not very clear in her mind; but as the philosophy of Yoga proclaims that by following certain extremely painful rules you can become lighter than air, crawl through a keyhole, and call down thunder and lightning at will, she might naturally hope to relate an experience that would considerably thrill a home audience.

So she straightway interrogated Potter, the attentive young man aforesaid, on the subject of yogis. The train was drawing near to Benares, and Potter was explaining to his party the average number of pilgrims who visited the Holy City every year, how many priests were said to fatten on Hindu piety or credulity on the sacred earth, and other interesting statistics of the same kind, when his ear imperfectly caught Miss Bayard's question.

"Excuse me," he inclined his head politely in her direction, "but I didn't quite—"

"I asked," said Miss Bayard, "if you could not take us to see a yogi? You know, we haven't met a yogi, and I'm sure there must be hundreds in Benares. It would be—er—really very interesting."

Potter looked rather puzzled. He could rattle off the exact number of years it had taken the reputed host of workmen to build the Taj, and point out the precise spot where the Great Mogul had sat on his Peacock Throne; but a yogi was not on the itinerary. In fact, he wasn't quite sure of the nature, even gender, of a yogi. So he hesitated. This was not so much to his discredit as it might seem, because you don't encounter real yogis in India any more frequently than you do tigers—which is quite seldom, if the truth must be known.

"I mean," Miss Bayard further explained, "those wonderful occult creatures one reads about, that sit on spikes, and tell you what is going on in another part of the world."

The rest of the party at once became interested. They unanimously declared in favor of seeing a yogi.

"It's not on our program, ladies and gentlemen," Potter protested, becoming somewhat enlightened; "but of course I'll do my best. I'll speak to our local agent about it and try if he can't arrange for us to see some yogis."

There again the plural way in which Potter lightly referred to the attraction called for by his party proved his unfamiliarity with the matter in hand. You cannot go to see yogis as you would to a play, and there are people who assert that you may live in India half your life and never chance upon a member of that holy but repulsive looking clan. But as soon as Potter had got his party safely tucked away in Ram Nath's hotel, he took Ram Nath into his confidence regarding the yogis, Ram Nath being the local agent of the Round the World Tours.

"Say, Mr. Ram Nath," he questioned, "my party wants to see a yogi. It's not on the itinerary, of course; but we've got to keep them in good humor, so where can we get hold of one?"

LIKE all prosperous babus, Ram Nath wore gold rimmed spectacles, with pantaloons marvelously tight round the ankles, patent leather shoes, and smelt rather overpoweringly of perfume. He was also superstitious in a limited way regarding unkempt holy men. That was why he had permitted a wandering holy man to take up his quarters in the cow and chicken yard back of the hotel, for fear that

if driven away he would curse the hotel and bring all manner of bad luck.

"Ya-as," he replied, with an inward sucking of his breath. "I don't think you have to go far to see a yogi. I think you find him in my cow yard. Him very dirty, therefore I think he great holy man. Ya-as, I give him rice so that he not bring trouble on my guests. But I hope he go away soon."

This was welcome news to Potter. He had feared that the search for a yogi would set back the Benares itinerary, and here was one that ought to satisfy Miss Bayard actually waiting, as it were, right under their feet. He lost no time in imparting his discovery with the air of a man who knew how to produce any attraction called for, from a magician to a tiger hunt, and suggested taking the yogi first before going on with the rest of the program. As by this time a yogi was more of a novelty to the party than temples and palaces, they at once fell in with the plan.

SO, with Ram Nath in the lead, Potter escorted his party round to the cow yard, where they discovered the holy man seated in an alcove of the surrounding mud wall, with a roost for chickens overhead. A group of women had just brought him a tribute of flowers, also, what was perhaps more to the point, they had deposited some copper coins in the bowl before him, and waited at a respectful distance for a word of wisdom to fall from his lips. If sanctity went with long matted hair, rags, and ashes, then the holy man must have stood, or sat, very high in his profession. He was certainly an unprepossessing holy man. At the moment Potter's party entered the yard, he appeared lost in meditation; but, opening his eyes, he started slightly as he noticed the white sahib group. Quickly gathering his rags about his person, he began muttering an endless prayer, with eyes again closed in devout petition.

"Om manu padmi hom! Om manu padmi hom! (Greatly to be desired is the beauty of the lotus!)"

Ram Nath came forward, followed by Potter, Miss Bayard, and the rest of the party. Ram Nath assumed a deferential attitude; but the faces of the others seemed to indicate a doubt whether to take the holy man seriously or the reverse. Presently Ram Nath nudged Potter and whispered in his ear. Potter thereupon produced a rupee and tossed it into the holy man's bowl. For some moments the holy man refused to notice the substantial addition to his collection; but at last, breaking off his monotonous tribute to the lotus, he lifted his eyes upon Ram Nath.

"Your Sanctity," began Ram Nath, "will be pleased to know that these white sahibs have come from over the Great Water to listen to your profound knowledge. They esteem finding you as a pearl in a mountain of trash. They regard you as the embodiment of all virtues."

"And unsanitary evils," added an always incredulous member of the party under his breath.

But for all that there was something about the holy man that seemed to impress Miss Bayard. She admonished the doubting person with a "Hush!" as the holy man raised his bare arm and pointed in her direction, but with eyes again shut and speaking as if in a soliloquy—Ram Nath translating.



"Why Did the Young Mem Sahib Send Her Lover Away?"

"He says, 'Why did the young Mem Sahib send her lover away from Cincinnati to wander in strange lands?'"

Miss Bayard started, while all eyes regarded her interrogatively.

"It was so ordained," went on the holy man, "that he might sit in the shadow of the temple and learn wisdom. Still he calls upon her name daily. I have spoken."

Miss Bayard's cheeks flushed as the holy man withdrew into meditation, and the party maintained a discreet silence.

"What nonsense!" she exclaimed, turning aside. "Just think of coming all the way to Benares to hear a story like that!" Apparently she was much disappointed with the holy man.

"Certainly," agreed the incredulous man of the party. "For fifty cents you could be told as much on the Bowery. Never did place much confidence in mind reading séances, anyway."

But Potter, being a keener observer of human nature than the doubting person, saw that somehow the holy man had chanced upon a private matter in Miss Bayard's life; so, to divert attention from an embarrassing situation, he hurried the party away on the Benares first day's itinerary.

AS everyone knows, there are a great many curious things to be seen in Benares,—hot and thronged bazaars presenting a riot of color, holy cows thrusting their muzzles into your back, which it would be dangerous to resent, holy monkeys climbing over temple walls, and thousands of more or less holy people splashing about in the ghat and palace lined waters of the holy Ganges. It's all extremely picturesque, if you don't mind unholy dirt everywhere and still more unholy odors. Such being on Potter's itinerary, he conducted his party from one scene to another. But somehow Miss Bayard seemed to have lost interest in temples and bathing ghats. In fact, she not only declared her satisfaction on returning to the hotel for lunch, but decided that she would remain there instead of going on the afternoon tour. So Potter took his party out less one member.

There it was Miss Bayard should have recollected that Benares is a very different place from Cincinnati. For many reasons it is best for strangers to go about Benares personally conducted. For a single reason Miss Bayard chose to take that course alone. Her first move was to seek another interview with the yogi in the rear court. The holy man had divulged a secret that she believed was known only to one person apart from herself; therefore she thought more highly of the yogi's powers than she had given the rest of the party to understand. She wanted to know more of certain particulars regarding—well, that was a matter private to the ear of the holy man.

But he had gone to the Kali Ghat (bathing place dedicated to Kali) to sit on the steps leading down to the sacred river. She was informed that he would be



found there, blessing the dripping bathers, and receiving copper coins in return—not being able to give something for nothing and continue in business, according to ancient custom, at any rate in Benares. So Miss Bayard inquired and took her way to the Kali Ghat. Presently she found herself being swept along in a stream of humanity, the like of which you will not find outside Benares. With whole families went the last black skinned and dark eyed baby. Rubbing shoulders with lean whining beggars were fat merchants. Then there were dancing women, musicians of sorts, fine native ladies in queer looking two-wheeled gilded chariots harnessed to bullocks not much larger than big dogs, fakirs, howling make-believe demons, and lifeless things on stretchers not pleasant to talk about.

It was certainly not the kind of crowd that ought to have formed part of the itinerary of a young woman from Cincinnati; but, since Miss Bayard had mixed herself up in it, she was forcibly carried onward toward the towering portals of the Kali Temple. In the dark passage of the gate there was a short period of frightful squeeze and turmoil. Then Miss Bayard was thrust out into the light of a wide court, whence descended the long flights of steps leading to a sweeping platform, which, in turn, sloped gently into the glistening but extremely dirty Ganges.

As far as her eyes could reach vast piles of temples and palaces rose from both banks, while thousands of pilgrims splashed in the life giving waters. As the crowd spread out on the steps, she was able to disentangle herself, and stood for some moments as much fascinated by the scene as she was confused by her recent experience. Gazing round at objects in her immediate vicinity, her glance fell on the one she sought, her yogi of the morning.

He was seated at the head of the steps, looking stranger than ever by manner of several flower garlands hung about his neck, and seemed to be doing a brisk trade in benedictions, if the number of copper coins dropped into his bowl was trustworthy evidence. Miss Bayard was on the point of moving forward to attract his attention, when he appeared to recognize her and with a quick gesture of his arm waved her back. As if to emphasize this injunction, he half rose and pointed to the entrance. Miss Bayard, feeling it best to comply, was about to retreat, when somehow or other she was edged back against a wall of the temple.

**T**HEN a curious thing occurred. The wall behind her seemed to open, two hands grasped her shoulders, another hand was slipped over her mouth, and before she could make any effort to free herself she was drawn back into total darkness. For the next few moments she was half dragged, half carried, along the slippery pavement of a narrow stone passage, to be thrust into some interior chamber, with the sound of a door being bolted upon her retreat. Certainly no such situation as this was on Potter's itinerary.

When Miss Bayard recovered from a temporary shock of surprise and alarm, not being of a hysterical nature, her first impulse was to examine the place in which she had been made captive. On one side between the wall and the roof a space of about a foot admitted a half-light and enabled her to judge that her prison was used as a peculiar kind of lumber room. There was the sort of miscellaneous collection of things that might be used in a heathen religious procession, including a large wooden cow on wheels. The wooden cow was set against the wall with the opening beneath the ceiling; so Miss Bayard climbed upon the cow's back and tried to see what lay beyond.

As far as she could make out, the chamber in which she was confined adjoined the sanctuary of the temple; for she could just see the back of the head and shoulders of an immense stone image. Beyond this her view did not extend. Apparently no one was in the sanctuary. So, as it was impossible to escape through the opening, and probably useless to call for assistance, Miss Bayard climbed down from the wooden cow's back to consider her predicament as calmly as possible. In the faint light and sultry atmosphere of the temple store room, her position was far from satisfactory. Whether her prison would be discovered, and if not what it was her captors intended to do with her, was more than doubtful. Once or twice she thought she caught an echo of the yogi's refrain, "*Om manu padmi hum*," and she sprang upon the wooden cow's back with the hope of hailing a possible friend. But on listening it was only to meet with disappointment.

**T**HE silence of the thick walls grew more intense, and with it the light gradually faded into complete darkness. An undefined dread was beginning

to gain possession of her, when she heard shuffling footsteps in the passage. The door of the room was unbolted and opened. Two figures stood beyond the door, and while one held up a lamp the other beckoned her to come forth. With an effort Miss Bayard summoned all her courage to demand the explanation of such an outrage against her liberty. "What do you mean by this?" she cried vehemently. "How dare you shut me up in this place?"

One of the men adopted an apologetic mien, speaking in native English. "Mem Sahib, if I do not say the truth, may I die a horrible death! But it is a mistake. It is not intended there shall come any harm to you. If you will please to come with us, you will see for yourself."

"But what do you mean by 'coming with you'?"



She Was Drawn Back Into Total Darkness.

persisted Miss Bayard in firm accents, though she was almost ready to faint.

"Mem Sahib," protested the man, "we shall see you in safety to your friends. In that you must believe our word."

A moment's reflection convinced Miss Bayard that there was no other course for her but to trust in their assurance. The very thought of remaining a whole night in that horrible prison caused her to shudder.

"Very well," she said. "I hope you realize what will be the consequences to you if you are not speaking the truth."

So she moved forward; but had barely crossed the threshold, when a long enveloping cloak was thrown over her form, her hands were grasped from behind, and she was thrust hurriedly along, down innumerable steps. Presently cooler air informed her that they had reached the open and the splash of water that she was close to the river. Then the chant of the yogi distinctly fell upon her ears.

"*Om manu padmi hom! Om manu padmi hom!*" "Be still, you madman!" some one muttered with a curse.

But the yogi still kept up his monotonous chant, "*Om manu padmi hom! Om manu padmi hom!*" Greatly to be desired is the beauty of the lotus!"

Miss Bayard then felt herself lifted into a boat, and while held securely to a seat she was warned not to utter a sound. But the cloak falling from her face disclosed her position. The two men who had brought her from the temple room had joined an-

other man in the boat, and all three appeared to be trying to induce the yogi to relinquish his purpose of making one of the party. But the yogi sat doggedly in the bow, keeping up his ceaseless chant.

"Well," said one of the men at last, "let the madman remain. Perhaps he will bring good luck."

So the boat was pushed off from the steps and was permitted to float silently down the dark current, suddenly illuminated as the outlines of a great temple on the farther shore sprang into relief with thousands of small lamps. In a vague way Miss Bayard received an impression of catching a glimpse of a water fête in honor of some god,—boatloads of demons, dancers, fakirs, and all sorts of people proving their piety with howls and strange music. But this scene shortly passed from view.

What course Miss Bayard might then have decided upon to regain her liberty may be left undecided, because the holy man attracted her attention by rising in his place and breaking into a louder incantation. Presently far down on the western sky there was a brilliant flash, in a few moments followed by the low rumble of distant thunder. In the stillness that succeeded the voice of the holy man rose higher and shriller. He swept the heavens with a wave of his arms, and seemed to bring another flash and rumble in response. Then a few drops of hot rain fell.

**A**S if moved by a united impulse of terror, the other men seized the oars and made the old tub of a boat leap for the bank. They were evidently anxious to part from the holy man's company at the earliest possible moment. The boat had barely touched the lowest step of a ghat when they besought him with tears in their voices to proceed thence with the blessings of all the gods. But the holy man seemed to prefer to remain where he was and continue his chant. Suddenly he threw out his arms toward Miss Bayard, calling to her in a strange tongue.

"A'o! A'o! Come! Come, my beloved!" he concluded, as if summoning her to a higher way of life.

Whether Miss Bayard would have preferred to remain with her abductors or to follow the holy man, as a selection of two evils, one cannot say, because she was not given a choice. The three men promptly lifted her out of the boat and shoved the holy man after her. Anything to get rid of his incantations, thunder, and lightning, and the gods above only knew what other magic! Then they shot the boat out into the darkness of the river, leaving Miss Bayard and the holy man on the steps of the ghat.

Miss Bayard was startled to hear a very unholy chuckle.

"Gee whizz!" burst from the holy man's lips, "that thunder and lightning came in handy. If it wasn't that the monsoon is due, it might have looked as if I really had something to do with it. But say," he addressed Miss Bayard, "you run home to your hotel quick! You've no business to be hanging around temples like this. It isn't safe."

Without giving her time to recover from her astonishment, the holy man, who spoke with a decided American accent, led her up to the top of the ghat and into the deserted street beyond. Presently he halted.

"Ram Nath's is right along there," he said, pointing out a direction. "You get home as fast as you can. I've got to stay around here: but," he added, thrusting a small pistol into her hand, "if anyone bothers you, just fire this off and I'll be on the spot like a flash of my lightning. Get a hurry on!" he urged her, as she seemed inclined to linger for an explanation. "I'll see you again soon if what I'm after pans out O. K."

Then he slipped away, gathering his ragged garment about him and droning, "*Om manu padmi hom!*"

**I**T was somewhere between Benares and Calcutta that a young man boarded the compartment in which Potter's All the World Round party were proceeding on their itinerary. He was properly clothed in pith helmet and khaki and took a seat opposite Miss Bayard. Looking Miss Bayard squarely in the face, he smiled, and then broke into a nasal chant.

"*Om manu padmi hom! Om manu padmi hom!*" Greatly to be desired is the beauty of the lotus! Say, Kate, but you're the lotus!"

"What! Bob Gardner! Good Heavens!" she gasped. "How in the world—"

"Yes," he nodded, "I think I did it pretty well—for an American yogi man. Came up from Calcutta," he explained, "to run down some bomb throwers. Used to do that kind of sleuth work for 'The Cincinnati Blade,' you know. 'Calcutta Press' recommended me for this job. Was hot on the trail, when you came along and nearly upset the whole business. Had to look out for you, of course, and could have done it at once by punching those rascals' heads; but that would have given me dead away on the spot. So had to work you out along the line of the holy man trick, and catch my quarry afterward. Got 'em all right. But what in the world, Kate," he asked, "made you go down to that temple alone and run the risk of being held for ransom, or turned over to some old Raja's harem? Guess it was something of that kind they had in mind."

With great discretion the other members of the party looked out of the windows or peered into their guidebooks, while Miss Bayard explained her unwise action.

It was not on Potter's itinerary, of course; but nevertheless the party was much interested in a familiar church scene a day or two after reaching Calcutta.